

DRAFT

Commencement Address: The Ohio State University

President Manuel T. Pacheco
The University of Arizona

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President Gee, Fellow Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Commencement ceremonies are happy occasions, as well they should be. Yet my own experience, dating back to days when my wife and I both received degrees from this University, suggests that Commencements would be even happier if speeches were shorter and came quickly to their point. I shall do my best to live up to this ideal.

The message that I bring to the graduates is simple yet profound: it is that we Americans should spend less time following revolutions in other countries and more time worrying about the need for revolution in our own.

The lesson that I draw from this message is equally simple: it is up to you and your generation across this country to provide the lead in the next American revolution. My message and this lesson are accompanied by a warning. Your revolution will not be a quick one. Two or three years may be enough for revolution in the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe, but we are not that efficient.

No human being with eyes, ears and a heart can doubt the need for change in this country. We Americans produce more food at lower cost than ever before but have yet to devise a good way of getting it to the needy, to the elderly, the poor and their children. We spend more on health care than any nation on earth yet tens of millions of our fellow citizens lack even a glimmering of health insurance, and this is when other industrialized countries have provided universal comprehensive health insurance for a generation and more. We build shining new schools with the latest in equipment and marching bands, yet all too often their graduates seem baffled by simple arithmetic. We have the world's largest collection of business schools yet seem incapable of running an effective banking system. We

produce attorneys without end yet our legal system finds difficulty in handling even simple cases with reasonable speed, let alone at reasonable cost. We win Nobel Prizes for economics but cannot convince our political leaders that spending more money than they control leaves the rest of us in deep debt.

Anyone with half a mind and half a heart must be concerned that our Republic appears to be losing its way. Part of the underlying reasons, of course, is that for 50 years we engaged in an arms race that bankrupted the Soviet Union just before it bankrupted us. The difference has been that the Soviets always settled for guns whereas we always pretended that we could have guns and butter. The Vietnam years should have taught us better. The plain fact is that the poverty, homelessness, crime, hunger and ignorance that oppress so many of our fellow citizens are completely incompatible with our national ideals.

It is pointless to talk of Democracy to a man who lacks the next meal. It is futile to speak of freedom and voting rights to a homeless family. It is cruel to talk of liberty and justice for all to the residents of inner city slums

that more nearly resemble Beirut than the calm streets of (*some Columbus suburb*).

I believe that many young Americans are just as disillusioned with our society today as were young Russians and young Poles with their societies a few years ago, and for the same reason. They see the yawning gap between proclaimed ideals and existing realities. Yes, I know that many of our young people have tuned out and prefer to focus their lives exclusively on the latest trendy fads in music, clothes and automobiles. But I am talking about the others, the brightest and the best, who possess both minds and hearts. Which brings me to today's graduates.

I put it squarely to the graduating class: What are you prepared to do to improve the situation? After all, you are the privileged ones. Your families and your society have lavished care on you. You were selected on merit to attend one of the nation's best universities. You have been instructed by a distinguished faculty. You have benefitted from fine buildings, an outstanding library and a beautiful campus. At great expense,

to family, to your state or to yourself, you have developed the abilities to read critically, to analyze complex situations, and to present ideas with clarity and order. You have accumulated the breadth of knowledge and understanding that is the hallmark of liberal education and also the depth of specialized knowledge that characterizes an undergraduate major or a professional field. Will you use your abilities only for personal advantage or with some regard for society's needs? If this nation cannot turn to you to work for a revolution that will get our nation back on track, then where can it turn? Who is better qualified to do the job?

There is more than one way to lead a revolution. I do not expect you to stand on tanks outside our White House. For some of you the opportunity to lead will come with election to state or national legislatures or with high position in great corporations. For many more of you opportunity will take the form of service on a city council, a United Way committee, a school board, or the one hundred and one other opportunities to contribute to a better and more just society. For every last one of you the opportunity will

come through chances to make your voice heard in public debate on the problems that afflict our nation.

You certainly have the brains to do a good job, otherwise you would not be here. You have the education also, otherwise you would not be graduating today. The question is, do you have the spirit and the resolve? Can you find time in your developing careers to look beyond personal concerns and try to help others? I remind you that nothing is more destructive than the selfish life, and nothing is more rewarding than service to others. This university, your university, was founded on the principle of service for the public good. As a land-grant institution it continues to be impelled by the conviction that knowledge in itself is not enough, that knowledge should be applied for the common good. In using your knowledge, your abilities and your spirit to feed the hungry, to care for the children, to improve life for the needy and to work for justice, you will be true both to yourselves and to your university. That is not a bad creed by which man and woman can live.

I congratulate you on your achievements. I wish you well in your future endeavors. Good luck to you all.